

## DOCKET NO. 2001-485-W/S - ORDER NO. 2003-74

IN RE: Rule to Show Cause on Submeterers ) ORDER OF  
 ) CLARIFICATION

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) on the request of Water Systems, Inc. (Water Systems or the Company), a submetering company, and a party to this Docket, for relief from certain restrictions imposed by Commission Order Nos. 2001-1142 and 2002-35.

Water Systems asserts that these Orders encourage customers not to pay for the water they use, and that various clients of the Company have experienced financial harm as a result, including the loss of tens of thousands of dollars in unpaid water bills and the virtual shutdown of new installations. Accordingly, Water Systems urges this Commission to rescind the provisions of these Orders, especially Order No. 2001-1142.

In Order No. 2001-1142, we held that no submeterer would be allowed to disconnect water or wastewater service or take any other adverse action against customers/tenants connected with the submetering of water or wastewater, pending resolution of this matter by the Commission. We then denied reconsideration/clarification of this matter in Order No. 2002-35.

However, we now address this issue. It was not the intent of our Orders to encourage non-payment of legitimately rendered and undisputed bills, but simply to

discourage potential adverse action against tenants who might find themselves in unreasonable circumstances as the result of a bill from a submeterer. Accordingly, we hold that such companies may take whatever reasonable action is necessary using normal business practices in the industry to collect legitimately rendered and undisputed bills. If a customer has a problem with such a bill, such customer may file a complaint with this Commission's Consumer Services Department.

We would, however, like more information on the extent of non-payment of bills from submeterers. Accordingly, we hold that the Commission Staff shall investigate the records of such companies to determine the extent of such non-payment.

Finally, we hold that the merits of this submetering docket shall be considered at the next Commission meeting.

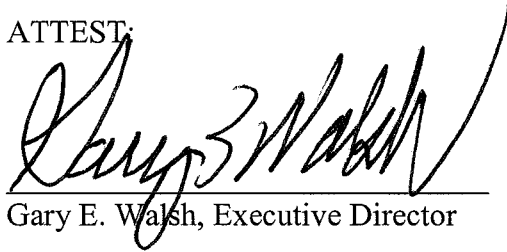
This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:



Mignon L. Clyburn, Chairman

ATTEST:



Gary E. Walsh, Executive Director

(SEAL)